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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2283
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1404
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3452
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2838
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000563

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN
DEPT FOR INR/B

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/05/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ SPORTS: ANOTHER FIEFDOM OF THE FIRST FAMILY

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Classified By: Classified By: DCM LEE LITZENBERGER, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: According to Kyrgyz insiders, the world of sports in Kyrgyzstan is highly politicized. President Bakiyev and his family are patrons of various sports programs, particularly boxing and fighting, which then serve as sources of loyal supporters and enforcers. Bakiyev family members have reportedly divided control of certain sports -- as well as spheres of economic and political influence --according to a "gentleman's agreement" among themselves.
END SUMMARY

THE FAMILY AGREEMENT

12. (C) Emboff was introduced to the dark world of Kyrgyz sports through two Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs sports programs in the last year. The first brought two Sports Envoy U.S. basketball players to Kyrgyzstan in 2008, and the second sent youth basketball team survivors of Kyrgyzstan's August 2008 airplane crash to see sports in the U.S., including NBA and NCAA games. After the second trip, team coach and trip participant Bakhtiar Kadyrov discussed the future of basketball and sports in Kyrgyzstan, and felt the need to explain the political context surrounding sports.

13. (C) Kadyrov is the director of a state-run, basketball-focused high school and the chair of the Sports Committee on the Bishkek city council. According to Kadyrov, his affiliations place him between the three major "offices" of the Bakiyev family. Kadyrov says that there is a gentleman's agreement between three family members: Janysh Bakiyev, a brother of the President; Adyl Bakiyev, another brother; and Maxim Bakiyev, the President's son.

14. (C) Janysh, the head of the Presidential Protection Service, is generally responsible for security structures, though he also dabbles in some business schemes, including association with groups of fighters in protection rackets and

other criminals. Adyl, a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs without portfolio, keeps a low profile. He is reportedly responsible for educational and social issues, though he also engages in some political and foreign trade activities. Maxim, who has wide business interests, is supposed to support economic development through support for both private and public businesses, and he also supports youth outreach.

15. (C) Kadyrov said that everyone who wants a position of influence, himself included, must join the Ak Jol Party. In addition, he said that people must affiliate themselves with an "office" as well. Kadyrov said he belongs to the office of Adyl, since Adyl appoints school directors. Kadyrov said that Adyl is also helping some of his supporters advance in other ways, apparently against the family agreement. For example, Adyl is pushing Kadyrov's political career in the Bishkek city council and Kadyrov's business interests through wholesale trade with China at the large Dordoi market in Bishkek. Kadyrov explained that Adyl maintains a low profile by running his empire indirectly through private foundations, including the charitable fund named after the late Jusup Bakiyev, another brother of the President.

NOTHING DIVIDES THE FAMILY EXCEPT SPORTS AND POLITICS

16. (C) Kadyrov's involvement with basketball has brought him close to the office of Maxim, whose young and wealthy friends are financing the sport. Kadyrov said that Maxim's friend and business partner Sergei Kim has spent between \$200-300,000 out of Maxim's office's funds to start a professional basketball league in Kyrgyzstan. Kim's official business ties include running the MGN investment group.

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During an informal and wide-ranging discussion with Emboff, Kim said that he used to play basketball with Maxim at the Kyrgyz Russian Slavic University before Maxim was thrown out of school. Kim is half ethnic Korean, as are several others in Maxim's circle, and half ethnic Russian, like Maxim himself. Kim admitted that he is free to use different entities of Maxim's office to support basketball in Kyrgyzstan. These include companies for sponsorship like the mobile phone company Mobilniye Seti, as well as media outlets like Channel 5 for news coverage.

17. (C) Kim explained that Maxim has long supported aggressive sports in Kyrgyzstan for "political reasons.⁸ Kim and Kadyrov asserted in the same meeting that the Kyrgyz State Agency on Sports under Aleskandr Voinov has orders from the Presidential Administration to dedicate nearly all of its funding to training boxers, wrestlers, and practitioners of martial arts. They said this is done because these sports are considered more "Kyrgyz," and because such athletes are more useful to the state. Kadyrov said boxers who are trained by government schools and academies are pushed into either the security forces, something the Rector of the Academy of Physical Culture agreed with in a separate meeting, or into criminal gangs (which can also be utilized by the government). Kim admitted that he and Maxim are forced by the policies of the administration to use their own funding to support the development of basketball in Kyrgyzstan.

18. (C) Voinov, a world champion kickboxer and member of the Dungan ethnic minority group, has been successful in orchestrating this scheme of government financing for training fighters, according to Kadyrov. Voinov himself claimed in separate meetings with Emboff that President Bakiyev strongly supports him and his policies despite a movement to replace him with an ethnic Kyrgyz. In particular, Voinov claimed that the President's support has helped him win disputes with figures like Maxim and the powerful Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration, Daniyar Usenov. Voinov is well known for personally establishing boxing academies for orphaned boys, which

Kadyrov said are helpful to Janysh Bakiyev. However, Voinov said that he is also grateful to Maxim and Kim for supporting basketball outside of the state budget, and does his best to keep them happy with other favors.

¶9. (C) Kadyrov commented that this balancing act that Voinov is attempting within the Bakiyev family is something that all politicians, officials and businessmen must try these days. He says that mid-level politicians like himself are growing more nervous as the greedy competition between the offices gets worse. Kim explained that Maxim and their office are indeed trying to expand their operations now. Voinov separately commented that Maxim and Kim are among the richest people in the country and seem to own everything except casinos.

COMMENT

¶10. (C) This description of the politics and petty intrigues in this small but growing sector of Kyrgyz society mirrors other rumors about the competition and corruption within the Bakiyev family. The constant balancing act and triangulation required of those on the outside is readily evident in other sectors as well. These stories have become common, and so many businessmen and second-tier political figures have had to deal with the competing camps, that it is becoming increasingly evident that almost all sectors of the Kyrgyz economy and government are being actively split up among competing "offices," or factions, of the Bakiyev family.
GFOELLER